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Club meets
1st, 2nd, & 4th Thursdays
At 11:45 am
Downtown Holiday Inn
Huntsville, AL

Opti - Topics

Opening

In contrast to the large turnout of last week, only 21 Optimists turned out to hear the most inspirational speaker of the year on today's program. Tim Vander Veer, sporting a bow tie and banker's suit, kept us from missing Fabiani too much by introducing himself around the room as "Tim Duarte."

President Tom Casteel asked Clyde Nevins to give the invocation and Tim Vander Veer to lead in reciting the Pledge of Allegiance.

Announcements



President Tom read a letter to the Club he had received from Marshawn Moore, a band student at Ed White Middle School. His letter, in pencil and on notebook paper, read:

Dear Optimist Club

I want to thank you for the funding of the trumpet I received. I enjoy using it so very much. It is a wonderful gift. Thank you again. God bless you all, and have a great day.

Sincerely,

Marshawn Moore

**Our business meeting
is held on the 3rd
Thursday of the
month at the Optimist
Recreation Center on
Oakwood Avenue**

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Tom also reported that contrary to rumors, Wholesale Trophies, where we have obtained our band plaques for several years, has not closed. They have, however, relocated. They are now located at 308 Oakwood Ave, about 100 feet east of Washington Street.



The Club's **installation banquet** for next year's officers will be held September 26 in our normal meeting room at the Downtown Holiday Inn. Time is 6:30 p.m. Gay Pepper circulated a sign-up sheet so we can get a number for the hotel. She needs to know how many members and how many guests will attend. Our District Governor, David Mills will do the installation. Let's have a good turnout.



President Tom Casteel reminded the Club that a **vote on the new dues structure** will be held at next week's business meeting. The motion to be presented and voted upon was given in last week's Opti-Topics.

The new dues structure will be voted on at the September Business Meeting. It will go into effect for the quarter beginning Oct 1, 2013. See attached notice.

Program

Program Chairman George McDonough introduced today's speaker, Ms. Swapna Kakani. He related how he had met Ms. Kakani about two years ago in his work with the Center for Aging. Swapna had been a top student at Randolph, and will finish her studies at UAB this December. She wore a backpack throughout her time with us, and her talk centered around what it was for and why it was required.

Swapna began her talk by thanking the Club for inviting her, and saying how honored she was to share her story. She also said she considered Dr. McDonough an old friend and like a family member. She said her talk would tell stories of how she has acquired *hope*, *determination*, and *perseverance*.

Hope. Swapna experienced another's hope 10 years ago when she was a Candy Striper, a volunteer in a post-surgical unit at Huntsville Hospital. She had an emotional interaction in a waiting area with a wife whose husband was in surgery. This lady had hope for a healthy future for her husband as a result to his surgery.

Swapna's struggle with severe medical problems began at birth, when her parents learned she was born with an intestinal obstruction, a condition requiring immediate surgery to remove most of her small intestine. Since then, it has been a lifetime for her of a cure, albeit from new surgeries, medications or diet. She has suffered from short-bowel syndrome, a condition requiring continual feeding by IVs and feeding tubes, but she still has hope. She has already had 51 surgeries, and more are in the future.

Determination. Despite her medical problems, Swapna said she has been determined to live her life like anyone else. She was on the tennis team at Randolph, playing matches with her backpack on and feeding tube in place. She won several matches and participated in the state tennis tournament.

Swapna said she is deeply committed to community service. She has volunteered with Habitat for Humanity and Community Free Clinic in the past, and is now volunteering at Morris Elementary School. With Habitat for Humanity she not only built houses in Huntsville, but traveled to San Francisco and Camden, NJ, to work in construction. Her volunteer work at Morris Elementary is teaching 3rd graders about nutrition, science and mathematics. She said she is invigorated and excited about the responses she gets from her students.

Perseverance. Swapna said she is fed liquid nutrition 24/7 by a feeding tube. When her backpack beeps, she is being fed. She recounted that while at Randolph,

when her backpack beeped her friends would often say “Lunch is ready!” Despite not being able to eat any solid food, she enjoys cooking for others. She can take some liquids, and chew gum.

Swapna is facing future surgeries. She is on the list for an intestinal transplant, which offers hope for being able to eat solid food and of being rid of the backpack. In the meantime, she is finishing her degree in Psychology at UAB, taking most of her courses over the internet.

Swapna received a standing ovation for her inspirational talk.

Closing

President Tom gave our speaker an Optimist coaster, and asked her to draw for the winner of our attendance prize. John Shirey, Al Adams, Vastell Williams, and Jeff Sandridge all missed out. Al Renz was the winning name on the fifth draw, making it twice he has won in the last three weeks.

Clyde Nevins

Optimistic Quote of the Week

“I think a hero is an ordinary individual who finds strength to persevere and endure in spite of overwhelming obstacles.”

~Christopher Reeve

CALENDAR

9/19 Thursday 11:45 am Optimist Recreation Center

Business Meeting - Food – (George McDonough)

9/26 Thursday 6:30 pm Downtown Holiday Inn

Officer Installation Banquet

10/1 Tuesday 4:00 pm 1st Commercial Bank

Board Meeting

10/3 Thursday 11:45 am Downtown Holiday Inn

TBD – Tim Vander Veer

10/4-6 Holiday Inn – Vicksburg, MS

AL-LA-MS District Meeting

10/10 Thursday 11:45 am Downtown Holiday Inn

TBD – Tim Vander Veer

10/17 Thursday 11:45 am Optimist Recreation Center

Business Meeting - Food – (Tim Vander Veer)

10/24 Thursday 11:45 am Downtown Holiday Inn

TBD – Tim Vander Veer

- PHOTOS -



Our speaker, Swapna Kakani and 1st VP George McDonough



Carl Winkler



Buddy Beck



Don Holder

Your Board of Directors has voted to make the following change to paragraph 6.6.1.1 'Regular Member Dues' in the Policies and Procedures Manual, REV E"

FROM:

Dues for Regular Members shall be \$110 per quarter.

TO:

Regular Members may select from two dues plans.

Plan A:

Plan A dues for Regular Members shall be \$120 per quarter.
Plan A includes all meals for the quarter.

Plan B:

Plan B dues for Regular Members shall be \$65 per quarter.
Plan B includes three meals during the quarter. Members shall be billed at the current meal cost for meals in excess of three.

Members may change between the plans by notifying the Secretary-Treasurer at least one week before the start of the quarter.



Huntsville Optimist Club
710 Versailles Drive
Huntsville, AL 35803-1728



TO:

THE OPTIMIST CREED

Promise Yourself -

To be so strong that nothing can disturb your peace of mind.

To talk health, happiness and prosperity to every person you meet.

To make all your friends feel that there is something in them.

To look at the sunny side of everything and make your optimism come true

To think only of the best, to work only for the best and to expect only the best.

To be just as enthusiastic about the success of others as you are about your own.

To forget the mistakes of the past and press on to the greater achievements of the future.

To wear a cheerful countenance at all times and give every living creature you meet a smile.

To give so much time to the improvement of yourself that you have no time to criticize others.

To be too large for worry, too noble for anger, too strong for fear, and too happy to permit the presence of trouble.

Optimist International